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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2348

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 4853

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2625

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2490

RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 3097

RHMFIS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 000255

SIPDIS

SCA/CEN; EEB

PLEASE PASS TO USTDA DAN STEIN

ENERGY FOR EKIMOFF/THOMPSON

COMMERCE FOR HUEPER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EINV](#) [ENRG](#) [UN](#) [TX](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: CULTURAL NORMS IMPACT BUSINESS

PROSPECTS FOR FOREIGN COMPANIES

Classified By: Charge Richard Miles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) The Amcit General Manager at Bertling Logistics in Ashgabat talked with Political Officers on February 18 about how foreign companies get their feet in the door with the Turkmen Government. He argued that having the support of high-level government officials from a foreign company's home country is critical. He expressed doubt whether many foreign companies had succeeded in Turkmenistan without their Governments' officials frequently meeting with Turkmen officials and representing the companies to the Turkmen Government. The Bertling General Manager said the introduction of a foreign company to Turkmen officials has to happen as part of a "high-ranking package." The reason this is important, he claimed, is that in the Turkmen culture, as a Turkic culture, introductions and major business must be conducted "boss to boss" at the highest level. The "bosses" must hit it off and develop a level of trust and understanding before the more specific details of a business opportunity can be discussed among mid-level representatives.

12. (C) For example, Turkish businessman Ahmet Calik became a close friend and trusted advisor to former President Niyazov in the 1990s. That occurred after Calik came with a Turkish Government delegation led by President Turgut Ozal, the Bertling General Manager said. Calik has continued to be part of Turkish commercial delegations after Berdimuhamedov became President, and he still has influence and strong inside connections in the Turkmen Government, partially because he's recognized here as an astute businessman, added our contact.

13. (C) Our contact claimed that having strong government support was key to the success of another company, Worldwide Construction, getting its foot in the door for both construction work and health care-related work. He said that when Berdimuhamedov went to New York in September 2007, the U.S. Government organized meetings between the visiting

leader and U.S. companies seeking to enter the Turkmen market. The company got its introduction to the President, and within a year and a half had opened an office in Ashgabat and was registered. Our contact claimed that another element key to Worldwide's success was its presentation of a Cadillac Escalade to Berdimuhamedov in 2008.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: The Bertling General Manager's insights are interesting, partly because of his experience living and working in Turkmenistan for so long, but also because he is himself a Turk. If his assessments are true, then it would seem that those who adapt to the Turkic cultural model are those most likely to succeed. He provides a logical argument for the idea that firm and visible government support is an important key to establishing a relationship with the Turkmen Government and doing business here successfully. END COMMENT.
MILES